

REMARKS

Claims 1-32 were pending in this application when the present Office Action was mailed (March 11, 2005). Claims 1, 11, 17, 22, and 28 have been amended to clarify aspects of these claims. Accordingly claims 1-32 remain pending.

In the March 11, 2005 Office Action, claims 1-32, were rejected under 35 U.S.C. § 103(a) as being unpatentable over U.S. Patent No. 4,236,686 to Barthelme et al. ("Barthelme") in combination with one or more of the following references: British Patent 2219777 to Taylor ("Taylor"); U.S. Patent No. 6,264,140 to McGeer et al. ("McGeer"); and German Patent 4301671. The undersigned attorney wishes to thank the Examiner for engaging in a telephone interview on May 25, 2005. During the telephone interview the pending claims and the foregoing references were discussed. The Examiner agreed that amending claim 1 to clarify that the aircraft is releasably captured by directly contacting a generally rigid lifting surface would patentably distinguish the claim over the applied references. This is so for at least the following reason. The applied references provide no motivation for releasably capturing the aircraft by directly contacting a generally rigid lifting surface and then securing the aircraft after capture by directly securing a second portion of the aircraft.

Claim 1 has been amended in accordance with the foregoing agreement. Therefore, the Section 103 rejection of claim 1 should be withdrawn. Claims 2-10 depend from claim 1. Accordingly, the Section 103 rejections of these claims should be withdrawn for the foregoing reasons, and for the additional features of these dependent claims.

Independent claims 11, 17, 22, and 28 have been amended in a manner generally similar to that described above with reference to claim 1. Claim 28 was additionally amended to correct a typographical error. Accordingly the Section 103 rejections of these independent claims should be withdrawn. Claims 12-16 depend from claim 11; claims 18-21 depend from claim 17; claims 23-27 depend from claim 22, and claims 29-32 depend from claim 28. Accordingly the Section 103 rejections of

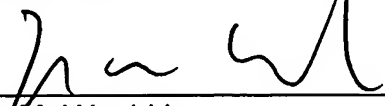
these dependent claims should be withdrawn for the foregoing reasons and for the additional features of these dependent claims.

Reconsideration and withdrawal of the rejections set forth in the Office Action dated March 11, 2005 are respectfully requested.

In view of the foregoing, the claims pending in the application comply with the requirements of 35 U.S.C. § 112 and patentably define over the applied art. A Notice of Allowance is, therefore, respectfully requested. If the Examiner has any questions or believes a telephone conference would expedite prosecution of this application, the Examiner is encouraged to call the undersigned at (206) 359-3257.

Respectfully submitted,

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